

*Tract No. II. of the Society for the Promotion of
Permanent and Universal Peace.*

WAR
INCONSISTENT WITH THE
DOCTRINE AND EXAMPLE
OF
JESUS CHRIST.

IN A LETTER TO A FRIEND.

RECOMMENDED TO THE PERUSAL OF THE PROFESSORS OF
CHRISTIANITY.

“ Follow peace with all men.”

“ Forgive your enemies, do good to them that hate you.”

“ My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this
world, then would my servants fight.”

NEW TEST.

BY J. SCOTT.

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This tract was written to a friend more than 20 years ago, without any intention of publication. It was however shewn to a bookseller without the knowledge of the writer: this produced an application to have it printed, which was agreed to in 1796, and two editions were struck off. It afterwards travelled both to Stockholm, where it was translated and printed, and to Philadelphia, or New York, where it is said also to have been reprinted. It is now given by the writer to the "Society for the Promotion of Permanent and Universal Peace," with a hope that the sentiments it contains, may shortly spread and communicate those blessings to mankind which the Bible encourages us to expect will visit the world in the latter days.

J. S.

WAR

INIMICAL TO CHRISTIANITY.

DEAR SIR,

WHEN I saw you lately, you may remember a part of our conversation turned on WAR—and perhaps you may think me singular in some of my sentiments, as controverting the received opinion of men in general. I have therefore devoted an hour or two to state to you further my particular views on this subject.

It is really astonishing to observe with how much composure mankind, and many persons, acknowledged to be among the best men living, admit the propriety of war; and while they in general terms deplore the misery of it, maintain its necessity in some shape or other; and for the most part, in that of defence; under this mask, the great adversary of men has forced his impositions on them, while they seem not to think of discussing the subject, as to the propriety of it, in every shape, though they profess to act on christian principles. For my own part, I cannot help wishing to see it become a subject of universal discussion, till the renunciation of the tenet shall spread itself as wide as the misery of it has hitherto done.

War, however dreadful in its progress, and awful in its consequences, is always pretended to be necessary; and time would be lost in endeavouring to prove, what scarcely any one will deny, namely, “the unlawfulness of *offensive wars*,” even on moral, much less on christian principles. The most thorough-paced politician, to the existence of whose power and dominion war is necessary, will always produce acts of aggression on the part of his adversaries, and justify his measures as defensive, on the ground of necessity. How liable such reasoning is to objection, will be evident, when it is considered, that under this plea, the most ambitious and arbitrary tyrants have set the engine in motion; and if war be convenient, and promise a partial gain, an argument in

justification will always be too readily found, although one certain consequence of war is a "*general loss*"—the gain only accruing to an inconsiderable number of individuals.

In these sentiments then, I have not merely to contend with men who oppose all the order of society, by committing depredation and offence universally; but those also who allow the system of bloodshed with the profession of christianity.

And here it is necessary to observe, that all war, even admitting an aggression, goes on the principle of rendering evil for evil. And how difficult is it, even politically, to decide where the aggression begins, or how one nation possesses a right to call in question what, to another nation, seems an equal right of theirs;—and yet questions of this kind frequently form a ground of the most bloody, destructive and unnatural wars. And even admitting the case to be clearly made out, how often does the retaliation of the injured party exceed the offence! And in that case, in a moral point of view, they certainly change ground, and the original aggressors become the injured party. Many instances of this kind might be stated, but I name one only; America, in her late contest with Great Britain, is a case in point.—America had chartered rights, in which she supposed she was oppressed by the parent state—she remonstrated and petitioned—The parent state resisted, and refused to comply—America resisted again.—Great Britain exercised coercion, and sent over an army—America raised a counter army to defend her rights, and was finally successful. And yet how often in that contest did the parties change ground, and each act offensively as well as defensively?—and who can state precisely where the act of aggression began, or where retaliation ought to have ceased? Indeed the subject seems involved in all this intricacy and these evil consequences, as if, by a special intervention of Providence, the rash steps of man should be restrained from going to the extreme bounds of right, lest they should overleap those bounds, and enter upon the territory of wrong. In some cases, the right will seem more clear; and perhaps on certain principles, may be made out; but as the question I make is, not whether morality, but whether christianity allow of war on such occasions, I think myself bound no further than the latter part of the question requires. I therefore state the fol-

lowing proposition, as a truth intimately connected with the nature of christianity, and as a sentiment which will finally prevail.

That War in every shape, is incompatible with the nature of christianity; and that no persons professing that religion, and under the full and proper influence of the temper and mind of Christ, can adopt, pursue, or plead for it.

My proof is very short and very plain, and will take up much less time than answering the objections invented by the sophistry of men.

For proof, then, I have to offer the plain, direct, and unequivocal commands of Christ and his apostles; and first, I refer to those admirable precepts of christian doctrine taught by Christ on the mount, Matt. ch. v. ver. 38, and 39: “Ye have heard that it hath been said, an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth; but I say unto you, that ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.” Here then Christ inculcates on all christians the principles of non-resistance, and forbids every kind of retaliation. And I beg leave to produce this text as a full answer to all those persons who state the example of the Jewish polity, or of Jewish characters as an argument to justify CHRISTIANS in making war, in seeking for retaliation, and in taking revenge. If they will be at the trouble of looking at the text, they will observe that the *Jewish dispensation* is changed, and that by the Christian Legislator himself—and HE has confirmed the doctrine by his own example. After so pointed and absolute a removing of the old dispensation, to make way for the new, namely, for the christian dispensation, (a dispensation of life and peace,) how any man can urge the justification of war, and at the same time, profess to act on christian principles, is, I confess, to me a mystery, very far beyond my penetration to understand.

In the same chapter our Saviour goes on to teach his disciples, not only the negative virtue of forbearance, but the positive duty of love, of loving their enemies, and of returning every possible good in their power for every possible injury they could receive; and he urges this doctrine on this principle, “that ye may be the children of your Father which is in Heaven; for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain

“on the just, and on the unjust;” and then he makes the excellency of his doctrines to consist in their superior effects; and their tendency to make his disciples *more* than other men. See ver. 46, 47, 48.

I know these doctrines are admitted by many, when applied only to individuals, or to christians in their individual capacity, but are denied when applied to professing christian states or political bodies; but by what authority is the sense restrained or applied in this particular way? I conceive, not by the authority of Christ, and I know of no other authority competent to establish such a restriction. Nay, it is said expressly; that no scripture is of private (mere private) interpretation: and it may fairly be inferred, that if individuals are bound to act up to certain principles, if they profess themselves christian, societies, under the same profession, are subject to the same rules; and if they transgress, will have to answer the trespass as transgressors of the command of Christ. The too common and well known distinction between political and moral right; or, in other words, between political expedience and christian duty, is a distinction dangerous in the extreme; it is not founded in truth, and is of a most pernicious tendency to morality in general. Political bargains are often made for convenience, and for convenience are often broken, on this principle; but our judgment must surely be grossly imposed upon before we can admit such sentiments.

Again, another precept of the christian religion is, “If thine enemy hunger, feed him—if he thirst, give him drink; for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.” Rom. xii. 20. If it be objected,* that the concluding part of this expression conveys the highest and most effectual idea of retaliation, they who suppose so, certainly mistake the sense, which will be quite plain, if we consult the subsequent verse. “Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.” Now I would ask, admitting

* Macknight observes, “The Metaphor is supposed to be taken from the melting of metals by covering them with burning coals; thus understood, the meaning will be, in so doing, thou shalt mollify thine enemy and bring him to a good temper. This no doubt is the best method of treating enemies; for it belongs to God to punish the injurious, but to the injured to overcome them by returning good for evil.”—See also Dr. Guyse and Pool’s continuators on the place.

this practice of doing good in return for evil, How can the principle of WAR between christian states be supported for a moment? It is only in the absence of every christian doctrine, and every humane feeling, that such a supposition can be admitted.

Once more we are commanded, as christians, to render, “not evil for evil, or railing for railing, but contrariwise blessing,” (1 Pet. iii. 9.) and this conduct is urged from a consideration of what we ourselves are called to partake, namely, “a blessing;” and if we profess to love our neighbour as ourselves, even on that principle, we should seek the welfare of all the human race, who are our brethren by nature, and claim all that love. It is quite unnecessary to make any comment further, or to quote a multitude of other passages: let these scriptures be read, give them all their scope, and the voice of impartiality and sound sense, as well as the voice of religion, of piety, of humanity, will unite to declare how forced a sense must be supplied, to make them breathe any thing else than love and peace, goodwill and harmony to the sons of men: indeed if they breathe not these, they breathe nothing. I shall forbear further proof on behalf of my proposition: for whoever remains undecided with the evidence already produced, will not be persuaded though one rose from the dead.

Hence I infer then, that christians are not at liberty to fight; and if the States, under which they live, require of them this service, they ought to be willing to suffer for refusing to bear arms, rather than to sin against the command of Christ, though men of courage (and none possess courage in the degree which good men do), yet their courage cannot, on the christian principle, be evinced as Soldiers, but rather as Martyrs; and although, from what has been said before, it is easy to see my sentiments involve those of non-resistance to Civil Authorities, yet I am for obedience to them, no further than a man can justify his conscience in the sight of God in obeying them; further than that no power on earth can be just in exacting obedience; further than that no true follower of the Saviour can be just in yielding it. If governments dispose even of the civil rights and privileges of their subjects, and barter them away, a christian *ought* not; he is not justified in contending for them by force—such conduct is forbidden by Christ. In such cases, submission is enjoined to civil laws, imposts, taxes,

and customs ; but when governments interfere with the religious rights of subjects, and dare to bind the consciences of men, then christians are called upon to endure any sufferings, rather than by submission to the laws of men to violate their higher and supreme obligations to the eternal God. But in this resistance it is to be observed, the weapons of their warfare are not carnal ; the kingdom of Christ is not to be promoted by his disciples spreading carnage, bloodshed, and confusion, far and wide ; but by an invincible adherence to his doctrines and example, and by a resistance even unto blood ; so striving against sin, that their enemies may be persuaded, by their constancy, of the power and excellence of those principles which would rather subject the professors of them to the greatest sufferings, than allow them to commit the least evil.

But if war, either foreign or civil, were a justifiable measure, we shall no doubt find a justification of it from some examples, left on record in the Bible, for our direction in this important case, and therefore the Jewish polity, which, in its commencement and progress, was supported by wars of God's own command, is argued to confirm it.

In reply to this objection, I refer to what has been already stated as to Christ's having abolished the Jewish dispensation. These destructive commands of God applied only to the Jews ; theirs was a government of *this* world ; the government of Christ is not so : that was a temporal constitution ; the constitution of Christ's government is spiritual. Hence, says he, " My kingdom is not " of this world : if my kingdom were of this world, *then would my* " *servants fight,*" John xviii. 36. Nor does the example of Abraham, David, and other good men, under that dispensation, supply better argument ; some things were permitted to them which were totally inconsistent with the christian economy—for instance, polygamy and divorces, which our Saviour tells us were only suffered in those times of ignorance, in condescension to their comparatively small degree of light, to the infirmities of men, or the hardness of their hearts. But perhaps this is granting too much, and a sufficient reason might be assigned without so much apology.

If it be allowed that *War was lawful* among the Jews, it cannot be afterwards said, that the Jews had not a ground for that argument in favour of War.

If, then, we as christians cannot find a ground for this argument in favour of War in the conduct of the Jews, or in the examples of its greatest champions, let us go to Christ—here we shall surely fail, our enemies themselves being judges ; nothing of resistance—nothing of retaliation or revenge—of force opposed to force—is in Christ Jesus—all was submission, humility, and love. But, say some, he assumed this character that he might fulfil the law for our sakes : he suffered all this for us ; and it behoved him to do so in the character of mediator which he sustained. We know that “ he was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before his shearers, he was dumb and opened not his mouth.” But we are not to be so vain as to conceive that every part of Christ’s character is imitable by us. True ; but if he assumed that character that he might fulfil the law for us, it proves that we had been transgressors of that law. Now let me ask, shall we, because he did thus, continue transgressors, and reward his love by continued acts of rebellion ? If our religion teach us this, I cease to wonder that we pursue war, or any other evil practices : and know, O vain man ! that however readily we admit what Jesus Christ did as Mediator, if we exclude his example, we have neither part nor lot in his salvation ; and if we imitate not the latter, we possess no proof of participating in the former : but a scripture quotation shall close this part of the subject. “ Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that ye should follow his steps ; who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth. Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again ; when he suffered he threatened not ; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously.” (1 Pet. ch. ii. v. 21, 22, 23.) Here his mediation and example are united, and what God has joined let no man put asunder. I cannot with equal pleasure refer to the character of the professing christian monarchs, emperors, and kings of the earth, nor procure an example from any of these, which would support and justify the system of war. I see them involved so far in the temper, the spirit, the views, and politics of this world, as to have foregone the temper, mind, and spirit of Christ ; and although much is said of the establishment of christianity by human laws, yet it is my *humble* belief, that true christianity owes not its support to any such aids, but is superior to every such thing as the policy, the institutions

or laws of men. They may derive much advantage from it, if truth be admitted to their councils ; but it will not derive much advantage from them. This subject would be too copious to dilate upon ; however, as the Emperor Constantine is the great champion of these human defenders, he shall pass in review ; and I shall content myself with noticing the most striking particulars which have led many to ascribe great things to him in this way. The story is generally exhibited thus : “ Constantine had observed
 “ the fatal miscarriages of the emperors, his predecessors, who had
 “ reposed confidence in the assistance of a multitude of gods ; and
 “ whose wars, notwithstanding their zeal, had been generally unpros-
 “ perous, and their ends unfortunate and untimely. On the other
 “ hand, he had observed that his father, who acknowledged one
 “ only supreme God and Governor of the World, had been gene-
 “ rally prosperous. This determined him to chuse this God, to
 “ whom he prayed to have him made known to himself, and that
 “ he would aid him in his then intended warlike expedition. He
 “ accordingly received a remarkable answer to his prayer, and
 “ saw a vision in the heavens—a pillar of light in the fashion of
 “ a cross, with a Greek inscription, *In this overcome*. This was
 “ at first matter of surprize and doubt ; but, in the night follow-
 “ ing, the Saviour appeared to him in a vision, with the cross in
 “ his hand, which he had shewed him the day before, commanding
 “ him to make a royal standard like it, and to cause it to be carried
 “ before him in his wars, as a token or ensign both of victory
 “ and safety.” This was commission enough to an ambitious man, already near the zenith of power, and aiming at the pinnacle of grandeur, honour, and success. This, like other accidental events, or fictitious stories, wrought on the minds of his soldiers, and they wanted but to be led on to obtain Victory ; fired with the fury of men in a crusade, they were irresistible. The emperor at the same time professing christianity, it became the prevailing religion of the times ; but, it is to be feared, less from conviction than from the fashion or custom ; and, where it was not professed, force often supplied the place of conviction or better argument ; and in the same way, nations have frequently since been baptized with the dagger at their throats, to increase its reputed converts.

Two or three short remarks on this extraordinary anecdote will

be needful. And first, is it compatible with the general tenor of scripture to admit, or even to suppose, that after Christ had finished his work of peace and goodwill to men ; and after having told his followers, that his kingdom was not of this world ; that in three hundred years after, he should appear, and even descend from heaven, to encourage the sanguinary operations of the sword ; and having suffered his gospel to rise and prosper by persecutions, by trials, by afflictions ; and having in the foregoing centuries, taught his disciples the doctrine of humility, submission, obedience, and self-denial, should now turn the tables on his enemies, and authorize men, who are Christian in little else than the name, to go forth and slaughter their opposers ? This appears so gross a contradiction of the principles of scripture, and to the spirit of Christ, that my understanding, poor as it is, revolts at it, and cannot admit it in any degree.

In the next place, if we review the state of christianity itself at that period, many errors had crept into the church ; lax in its discipline, divided in its doctrines and opinions, error had made great progress ; and even in some of the men who stood foremost among the advocates of Christ in that day, we meet with many ridiculous, inconsistent, and immoral facts ; indeed the purity of the gospel was far corrupted, and this was that baleful hour when religion was first made the engine of state policy, and then first the church, or, at least, men professing to be members of it, were hired for a standing army ; and I cannot help thinking, that this story of Constantine is a mere figment, invented to serve a particular turn, and which, from the fatal credit it has gained, has imposed on millions who bear the christian name.

If history and facts were to be adduced, there might be many instances brought forward where christians, impelled by a true spirit, have in the total renunciation of war, been defended from their enemies, and preserved an honour to their profession. The Quakers, at this day, are living witnesses of the truth of this remark ; and the Moravians maintain the same principles.

The submission of acknowledged good men to the practice of war, will, on investigation, be found equally nugatory to the support of the error. I admit good men have defended the principle, but they did it as patriots, not as christians—as lovers of their

country, but not as the followers of Christ. Others have gone into the practice, and yet seemed to carry the habits of piety about them ; but it altogether appears to me as a defect and imperfection in that character, which, on the whole, might be allowed to be good, only partially. For how does it sink our ideas of exalted piety, and of the spirit and mind of Christ residing in a heart, which is conscious, that the next hour it may be summoned to devise and scatter death and destruction all around. Peter was a good man, but although his habits were good, he sometimes failed in practice. He, in the spirit of retaliation and human affection towards his Master, drew his sword and cut off an enemy's ear ; and did he obtain commendation ?—No : “ Put up thy sword,” said the meek Saviour, “ for *all* they that take the sword shall perish by the sword :” and how well this prediction has been verified, let matter of fact declare. On the whole, the providence of God seems to have permitted this evil, and borne with the manners of men, and especially of some who are acknowledged to be good men in the main, in the same way in which he allowed polygamy and divorces under the Old Testament ; namely, because of the hardness of men's hearts, and of the darkness of those times. But that the usage of such practices should be followed on this account, is as unreasonable as to suppose, that the duplicity of Jacob, or the sins of David, should form an apology for our imitation of their crimes.

I have sometimes given scope to my mind, and fancied myself engaged in war, in the defence of the best cause for which the sword was ever drawn—civil liberty, and the vindication of the oppressed from the hand of tyranny ; and have, for the moment, admitted it as lawful ; I have anticipated the sound of the trumpet in leading on to the charge, and then have plunged amidst the roaring of cannon, or the clangor of arms in the heat of action—either leading on or led, my bosom swelled with the importance of the cause, my heart beat high, I looked on death with defiance, and on my foes with disdain, determining to conquer or perish in the attempt. All fresh from this bloody scene, I have brought my temper, my bosom, my heart, to the great Exemplar of christian perfection, and shame has covered me.—What trait of the mind of Christ did I follow when I defied death ?—did I do it as a christian ?—Ah, no ! Could my hopes of endless glory be certain

during the eventful and bloody scene ! did the spirit of the christian religion, or the pattern of the holy Jesus, inspire me with disdain for my enemies, while piercing their vitals, and sending their souls into the shades of death ?—No—he commanded me to love my enemies, but I have been destroying them altogether ; he has enjoined submission and suffering, but I have sought for superiority, victory and conquest. On the whole, let that man stand forth, if earth can produce such an one, who can say he goes into action and engages in the heat of war, in that spirit which he is conscious will be approved and owned by the Judge of all the earth, when all our subterfuges and self-impositions must be renounced ? and if such an one should arise, and declare that he could do so, I for my own part should infer, that a deceived heart had turned him aside. But if it be admitted, that the temper of mind necessary for the action of war, is inconsistent with Christianity, I have all I ask ; and those who argue for war have to support an allowed indefensible scheme. But let professing christians beware how they support it, for it strikes me very forcibly, that in proportion as they give aid to that, they impede the real progress of Christ's religion.

I shall now notice, and endeavour to answer, some of the most popular objections in favour of the fighting system. It is said, that if any nation were to adopt the pacific conduct I have recommended, the surrounding nations of the world would beset and swallow it up. But let it be remembered, that I expect this conduct only to proceed from the effects of christianity,* and this, if real and effectual, supposes a degree, a large degree, of confidence and dependence upon God ; and were I to bring scripture, or matter of fact, to prove that such a people were never forsaken or confounded, it would be like holding a taper to the sun. Who ever trusted in God, and were confounded ? who ever depended on his aid, and were not delivered ? who, in the exercise of obedience to his precepts, were ever forsaken ? The annals of time cannot produce an instance—the annals of time can produce thousands against it. Let facts speak ; the man, the family, the society, the nation, who live in obedience to his commands, have

* Let it be remembered we are a *professing* christian nation.

God's peculiar protection: his arm is an invincible shield, and when a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him: but if, in the wise and inscrutable ways of his providence, he permit some to suffer, in order to excite stronger zeal in others, and to spread truth by their sufferings, this is no argument in favour of resistance by violence; nor should we impute their sufferings to the conquest and superiority of their enemies merely, but to a higher intention, that thousands may be won by the firmness and constancy, the patience and exalted piety, with which they meet the terrors of their persecutors. The conquest is on their side; and they go by the very means of persecution (however evil in their intention) from an inferior to a superior enjoyment, from earth to heaven: and in this christianity at first triumphed; not by the law of retaliation or force, but by a constant, faithful adherence to the law of Christ. And, oh! had reformers and their followers stopped there, and rather than have aimed to support the cause of piety by temporal power and the secular arm, the spirit of Christ had still been seen triumphant. But the idea of maintaining true religion, pure and undefiled religion, by pomp and splendour, by power and the sword, is like death in the pot, and is destructive of the true notion and spirit of christianity: and such false apprehensions of external glory and worldly splendour lay the ground of this error, which the scriptures, the example of Christ himself, and the experience of good men, uniformly combat. Says a good writer, "The idea of a
 "temporal Messiah is mean and carnal: this mean idea hath pos-
 "sessed the minds of the professed disciples of Christ in all ages.
 "The apostles indeed soon struggled through such low secular
 "notions; but a very large succession of their pretended followers
 "have expired incurable under this disease."*

That the existence of the christian church and its success are not owing to the sword, or dependent on it, has already been instanced in the history of the Quakers, and of the Moravians, even in this age of the world, and whose example in this respect, it is much to be regretted, is so little followed.

Another argument which I have heard used, and am grieved that I do not wrong human nature in reporting it, is, that if it

* Claude's Essay, Vol. II. page 237, note 2.

were not for the intervention of wars the inhabitants of the earth would be too numerous ; and that wars therefore are necessary to prevent a pressure which the earth could not sustain. Providence, say some, ordains or permits the continuance of war to thin the ranks of life, and take the superfluous out of the way. But humanity shudders at an argument like this !—It might suit a Pharaoh, a Nero, or an Attila, but only with wretches of that sanguinary cast can the argument have any weight. For an answer to this I would only refer its advocates to their own bosom ; to the terrors, the consciousness, the horror, which must shortly awaken the keen sensations of the guilt of bloodshed, and condemn them at that bar where hypocrisy shall lose its mask, and the cruel meet a full reward. The argument can have no weight with a heart susceptible of human sensibility ; much less with those persons who study and imitate the compassion of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Another objection is founded on the argument of natural, or civil right, and infers the justice of resistance, in defence of those rights and liberties, which are by many esteemed dearer than life itself, and without which many have refused to live ; and to maintain which thousands have died.*

This objection has a degree of weight, and may be tenable on the score of natural religion. It was under this case that the Jews often fought, and had the divine command ; and under this case also many of the Gentile nations have resisted the invasions of tyrants and oppressors ; and under a system of human policy it may be admitted to resist the oppressions of tyranny—such conduct may be denominated patriotism, and a natural affection of the human mind ; but christianity calls on us to renounce it for submission, for suffering, for Christ's sake, and for the exercise of patience and endurance. If it were lawful for christians to war, even on this ground some abatement must necessarily be made, from the positive commands of Christ “to love our enemies,” “to do good to them that hate us,” “to return good for evil,” and such like : commands of equal import with those which command us to love our neighbour as ourselves, or “to love God supremely :” com-

* England can witness this in her Hampdens, Russells, Sidneys, &c.

mands of equal authority with those which instituted all the ordinances of the gospel ; and which are deserving of no less regard. To what a wonderful degree of prejudice then must the minds of professing christians have risen to doubt the authority, or rob it of its effect ? You see I take the liberty of differing from the general sentiments of allowed good men on this subject ; but remember I am accountable to none but God. No human tribunal dare, with justice, to interfere with the rights of conscience : and I have a hope, that if we could but have an interchange of sentiments, I should find thousands and millions who think with me ; and although I infer nothing from multitude, yet I think the hope is not vain. The dreadful avidity with which war has been pursued of late by the French nation, by the continental allies, and the deep, affecting, and determined part which our own country has taken in it, will, I trust, do much to make professing christians consider their ways, and think seriously of discussing the propriety of the subject, and the nature of those arguments by which it is supported ; and which would not fail, in some degree, to unveil the minds of men, which have been so long and so unhappily obscured. This must be the case before obedience to Christ is much extended or becomes universal ; a blessing which we have reason to expect, and ground to pray for, from many of the promises of scripture which remain yet to be fulfilled. It is to be wished that this might be made the subject for some academic or scholastic prize. If treated in a proper manner, it would not fail to make the question more popular, and the subject better understood. The miseries of war, its expenses, national losses and immoral effects, furnish matter too copious for me to urge within my present compass and design ; and they are worthy of much abler and more minute discussion than mine. With a hope, and some degree of expectation, that such a discussion may hereafter prevail, I daily use that petition of my Master—“ *Thy kingdom come.*”

I am, dear Sir,

Yours, &c.